IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1.-5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) A method of determining whether a storage unit included in an ink cartridge is normal, wherein the ink cartridge is configured to be detachably attached to a printer, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) reading a piece of decision information that has been registered in advance in a predetermined format, from the storage unit; and

(b) identifying whether the read-out piece of decision information satisfies the predetermined format, so as to determine whether the storage unit is normal,

wherein the step (b) determines that the storage unit is not normal in the case where the read-out piece of decision information does not satisfy the predetermined format, wherein the step (b) uses a piece of information relating to a month of manufacture of the ink cartridge as the piece of decision information, wherein the piece of information relating to the month of manufacture of the ink cartridge is expressed by a data length of four bits, and the step (b) determines that the storage unit is not normal in the case where all the four bits have an identical digit, that is, either one of '0' and '1'.

7. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 6, the method further comprising the step of:

(c) providing a display representing that the storage unit is not normal, when the step (b) determines that the storage unit is not normal.

8. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 6, the method further comprising the step of:

(d) discontinuing a printing operation of the printer, when the step (b) determines that the storage unit is not normal.

9. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with any one of claim [[3, 4,]] 7 and 8, the method further comprising the step of:

(e) causing the printer to perform a printing operation, when the step (b) determines that the storage unit is normal since the read-out piece of ink related information satisfies the predetermined format.

10.-15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) A printer, to which an ink cartridge having a storage unit is detachably attached, the printer comprising:

a reading unit reading a piece of decision information, wherein the piece of information has been registered in advance in a predetermined format, from the storage unit; and

a decision unit identifying whether the read-out piece of decision information satisfies the predetermined format, so as to determine whether or not the storage unit is normal,

wherein the decision unit determines that the storage unit is not normal in the case where the read-out piece of decision information does not satisfy the predetermined format, wherein the piece of decision information is a piece of information relating to a month of manufacture of the ink cartridge, wherein the piece of information relating to the month of manufacture of the ink cartridge is expressed by a data length of four bits, and the decision

unit determines that the storage unit is not normal in the case where all the four bits have an

identical digit, that is, either one of '0' and '1'.

17. (Original) A printer in accordance with claim 16, the printer further comprising:

a display unit that provides a display representing that the storage unit is not normal,

when the decision unit determines that the storage unit is not normal.

18. (Original) A printer in accordance with claim 16, the printer further comprising:

a printing operation stop unit that discontinues a printing operation of the printer,

when the decision unit determines that the storage unit is not normal.

19.-22. (Canceled)

23. (Previously Presented) A printer, to which an ink cartridge having a storage unit

is detachably attached, the printer comprising:

a reading unit reading a piece of decision information, wherein the piece of

information has been registered in advance in a predetermined format, from the storage unit;

and

a decision unit identifying whether the read-out piece of decision information satisfies

the predetermined format, so as to determine whether or not the storage unit is normal,

wherein the decision unit determines that the storage unit is normal in the case where

the read-out piece of decision information satisfies the predetermined format, wherein the

piece of decision information is a piece of information relating to a month of manufacture of

the ink cartridge, wherein the piece of information relating to the month of manufacture of

the ink cartridge is expressed by a data length of four bits, and the decision unit determines

that the storage unit is not normal in the case where all the four bits have an identical digit,

that is, either one of '0' and '1'.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) An ink cartridge ~~in accordance with claim 24~~ comprising a

storage unit included in an ink cartridge, wherein the ink cartridge is detachably attached to a

printer, the storage unit comprising:

an address counter that outputs a count in response to a clock signal output from the

printer; and

a storage element that stores plural pieces of specific information including a piece of

ink related information registered in a predetermined format and that is sequentially accessed

based on the count output from the address counter,

wherein the piece of ink related information is a piece of information relating to a

month of manufacture of the ink cartridge,

wherein the piece of information relating to month of manufacture of the ink cartridge

is expressed by a data length of four bits, and

wherein the storage unit is determined not normal in the case where all the four bits

have an identical digit, that is, either one of '0' and '1'.